



**MINUTES of the Regular Meeting of the
Pliocene Ridge CSD Board of Directors
Date: Monday October 14, 2024 Time: 6:30 pm
Location: Pike City Firehouse**

1. ESTABLISH QUORUM, CALL TO ORDER, FLAG SALUTE: The meeting was called to order at 6:32 pm by President Chris Mills. **Flag Salute.** Present: Board members, Grace Lundeen, Bruce Coons, Chris Mills and Burns Tenney. Director Pam Davis was absent. Also in attendance: District Fire Chief Chris Dorn, Pike City Assistant Chief Jim Buckbee, Alleghany Assistant Chiefs David Arbogast and Ned Cusato, Firefighters: Ryan McCoy, Ethan Esch, Zack Kostik, and Tim Standley. Public: none Pliocene Ridge CSD Secretary Rae Bell Arbogast was present and took the minutes.

2. CONSENT CALENDAR:

Approval of current Agenda, Minutes for regular meeting held September 19, 2024, and the Treasurer's report for September 2024. There was one question about the streetlights. The treasurer confirmed an additional streetlight has been added to the billing for Forest City. **A motion was made to approve the consent calendar by Burns Tenney and seconded by Chris Mills Ayes: Coons, Lundeen, Mills, Tenney Noes: none Absent: Davis Abstain: none ~ Motion carried.**

3. PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

4. INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

a) Correspondence Incoming From Golden State Risk Management (GSRMA), they are looking for a fire district representative for their board. Notice of GSRMA annual conference Oct. 24th and 25th. **Outgoing:** Signed Biennial Notice of Conflict of Interest code review sent to Sierra County Clerk-Recorders Office.

b) Committee/Member/Business Reports:

1. *Chief's Report* ~ Chief Dorn reported that call volume was light the last month with two medical aids that both required helicopters. Fire activity has slowed down, but we are still in high fire danger with no end in sight. He got the district one more stand-by assignment since the last meeting (36 hours) and is hoping to get one more. There was a question about the status of rescue 6740 and he responded that it still needs to have the valves adjusted, needs some new hoses and some fine tuning.

2. *Assistant Chiefs' Report:* None.

3. *Alleghany Fire Department Auxiliary:* ~ No report.

4. *Pike Community Support Foundation* ~ No report.

5. *Board Member/Staff Reports* ~ Secretary/Treasurer Rae Bell Arbogast reported that she and Risk Manager Cameron Shay were scheduled to meet Jake Dickman of GSRMA on October 18th. This is to "kick-off" the district's participation in the Risk Management Accreditation Program.

6. *Firewise Community Projects* ~ Rae Bell reported that she had been contacted by the Sierra County Firesafe counsel and their forester should be in Pike and Alleghany soon to get the fuels reduction planning grant application started.

7. *Firehouse Projects & ADA Compliance:*~ **Re: Pike Firehouse Project:** A preliminary cost comparison of the two different options for adding larger bays in Pike was received from the architect. (Option 1, bring existing firehouse into ADA compliance and add two-bay structure next to it. Option 2, tear down existing firehouse and build a new one). The committee met by conference call on August 30th to go over the estimates. [Option 1 \$870,137 and Option 2 \$4,218,362] There were many things in

the plans for both options that the committee felt should be removed to lower the costs. Denise Ruane was to provide committee feedback to the architect for a revised cost comparison.

Engine Bay ADA compliant bathroom Pike FH: Project manager Ned Cusato reported that he hadn't had a chance to start the permit application.

Alleghany Firehouse Station 1: Rae Bell suggested that the district may need to consider hiring a contractor to put the siding on the firehouse in Alleghany. It has been sitting in the county yard for over two years. Director Tenney requested that an action item for this be placed on next month's meeting agenda.

8. *Pending Grants* – The district finally got word that it was not awarded the Rural Capacity 50/50 Grant for radio equipment. The person who has been administering that grant forever retired. A new person is handling it, and it was difficult to get a clear answer from him.

USDA Vehicle Grant for a new rescue truck for Pike: All requested documents were submitted on very short notice on Sept. 27th. Rae Bell followed up the 2nd week of October and the USDA rep said that PRCS D must meet the letter of conditions, they aren't raising amount. She acted like she didn't remember suggesting that we might get the full amount after September 30th. Everything that can be done for the letter of conditions has been done. A few things listed don't take place until the process is started.

5. ACTION ITEMS

a) *Unfinished Business*

1. *Further discussion re: Chief Dorn use of command vehicle.* Rae Bell was happy to report that the district's insurance pool GSRMA provides free HR Legal counsel to its members! Both the district's insurance pool representative and the Human Resources Attorney weighed in on the vehicle use topic. Conclusion: Response time is critical and allowing the Chief to use the vehicle in this manner while he is on call as duty-officer is a good idea and is very common. It should be written into either his job-description, or a policy or both. Also, on days when there is no emergency he should pay for gas. [He had already suggested this].

2. *Further Discussion re: new employment terms of Secretary/Treasurer position.* There was a question in October about whether-or-not the conversion from Independent Contractor to Employee triggered a job posting requirement. The HR Attorney said "no", her opinion was provided in writing by email to all directors. She also said that if the position is split, only the portion that the district is recruiting for will require a job posting.

Rae Bell also stated that she had a hard time communicating by speaker phone the previous month and wanted to clarify that her new rate of minimum wage is not a straight across increase in pay. Her old contract was for \$200 per month plus hourly pay at \$20 per hour for work that generates income. It is not an "apples to apples comparison". For the hourly work she will be paid \$4.00 per hour less than under the old contract. Payroll taxes of around 11% is part of the projected increase in costs to the district. The HR Attorney confirmed that minimum wage is preferable over flat rate pay for a non-exempt employee.

b) *New Business*

1. *Consider creating a Capital Improvement Reserve Fund:* Treasurer Rae Bell explained that while the district does have a policy to prioritize the existing reserve funds for Capital Expenditures it is not required. [Does not apply to the contingency fund and the streetlight fund]. The district does not have a fund designated specifically for Capital Improvements. District Policy 2040 Capitalization was reviewed.

She went on to explain that having a Capital Improvement Fund is looked upon favorably by many funding sources. The idea is to have a Capital Improvement Fund that is not tied to a specific fire department. It will be used for whatever is determined to be the district's highest need. Chief Dorn emphasized that this is key to his goal of elevating the district to a more professional level. He stated that we need to move away from thinking in terms of two fire departments, towards viewing the district as a single entity.

Burns Tenney asked why the reserve funds are divided like they are. Rae Bell explained that some of it is based on historical policy, such as dividing mutual aid income (no longer in place) and current policies, such as honoring the wishes of donors who wish to contribute to a specific fire department. There is also a policy to put the net revenue from excess vehicle sales into the vehicle fund for the department that housed the vehicle.

A motion was made to create a Capital Improvement Fund by Bruce Coons and seconded by Burns Tenney. Ayes: Coons, Lundeen, Mills, Tenney Noes: none Absent: Davis Abstain: none ~ Motion carried. [Money will be placed in the fund by the board after the stand-by assignments are paid. Exact amount to be determined.]

6. ANNOUNCEMENTS, NEXT MEETING DATE & AGENDA ITEMS:

Chief Dorn stated that he wanted to have a board meeting with the first responders present and he thought that it should be done once per year. He stated that it is important for us to know each other. He asked everyone to introduce themselves, state where they live and how long they have been involved. Ryan McCoy stated that he moved to Pike in July and has been attending weekly trainings since. Ethan Esch stated that he has been living in Pike and attending trainings for four years. David Arbogast stated that he has lived in Alleghany for a long time and has been on the fire department for a long time. Jim Buckbee stated that he has lived in Pike since 1986 and has been involved with the Fire Department the entire time. Zack Kostik stated that he has lived in Pike since 1991. Tim Standley stated that he moved to Alleghany in 1965 and has lived in either Pike or Alleghany since then, currently in Pike. Chris Dorn stated that he has lived in Pike for 11 years and joined the department right away. He has been chief for five years. Burns Tenney stated that he moved to Alleghany in 1989 and was involved with the fire department when it was AVFD. He worked out of the area for 22 years and recently moved back full time. He joined the board and is here to help. Chris Mills stated that he moved to Pike in 1989 and has been on the board for about 6 years. Grace Lundeen stated that she moved to Pike in 1973 and joined the board about 7 years ago, but that she won't be renewing her term because she is 90 years old! Bruce Coons stated that he moved to Alleghany in 2004. He is a retired firefighter and currently runs the water system in Alleghany. Rae Bell Arbogast stated that she moved to the area with her family in 1975 and joined AVFD in 1996 as an EMT and as a board member.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for November 21, 2024 in Alleghany at Station 2.

Next Meeting Agenda items: Consider hiring a contractor for Alleghany Station 1 repairs.

7. ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business before the board, the meeting was adjourned at 7:11 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Rae Bell Arbogast, Secretary